

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 14, 2022  
9:03 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Roger Holland, Chair  
Senator Shelley Hughes  
Senator Tom Begich

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair  
Senator Peter Micciche

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA~ ACCOUNTABILITY~ AND ASSESSMENT  
UPDATE

HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

HEIDI TESHNER, Acting Deputy Commissioner  
Department of Education and Early Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided an update on the public school  
funding formula.

DEBORAH RIDDLE, Division Operations Manager  
Division of Innovation and Education Excellence  
Department of Education and Early Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided an update on public school  
accountability.

KELLY MANNING, Deputy Director  
Division of Innovation and Education Excellence  
Department of Education and Early Development

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provide an update on public school assessment.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[9:03:28 AM](#)

**CHAIR ROGER HOLLAND** called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Begich, Hughes, and Chair Holland.

#### **Public School Funding Formula, Accountability, and Assessment Update**

[9:03:59 AM](#)

**CHAIR HOLLAND** announced the consideration of a Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) update on the public school funding formula, accountability, and assessment.

[9:04:23 AM](#)

**HEIDI TESHNER**, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development, Juneau, Alaska, stated the committee would provide an update on the public school funding formula for 2022 - 2023 and other state-funded programs that are affected by student counts. Accountability and assessments would be presented by Deborah Riddle and Kelly Manning, respectively.

**MS. TESHNER** advanced to slide 4 and said the legislature established the Public School Funding Formula in AS 14.17 for use in funding school operational costs. It is commonly referred to as the foundation formula. Adopted under Senate Bill 36 in 1998, it was implemented in 1999. Each school district's funding is comprised of state aid, required local contribution, and federal impact aid. Alaska's nineteen Regional Education Attendance Areas (REAAs) do not have a required local contribution. A school district is only eligible for foundation funding as calculated under the formula and set out in the statute. Determining the Average Daily Membership (ADM) for each school is the first step in determining state aid for a district.

**MS. TESHNER** stated the internet links on slide 4 lead to the department's School Finance website, where information on foundation funding and related information can be found. The second link is for the document "The Public School Funding Program Overview," which covers each formula step. The history and changes made to the foundation formula were provided in

handout 2, "Alaska Public School Funding - Foundation Formula History."

9:07:12 AM

MS. TESHNER said the ADM is the defined term for student count data. It is the number of enrolled students through the 20-day school count period that ends the fourth Friday of October. For the FY 2021-2022 school year, the 20-day school count period began on September 27 and ended on October 22, 2021. Districts must submit school count data, ADM, to the department within two weeks after the end of the count period per AS 14.17.6009(a).

MS. TESHNER moved to slide 6 and said the table shows actual, projected, and Online Alaska Student Identification System (OASIS) updates for FY 2021-2023 statewide school enrollment counts. OASIS updates are reconciled to ensure no student is counted more than once. The bottom of slide 6 provides information on when the data was submitted and how it was used.

9:08:37 AM

SENATOR HUGHES asked how the determination was made to use a 20-day student count period instead of average attendance.

MS. TESHNER replied that she does not know why Alaska chose membership over attendance for use in the formula.

SENATOR BEGICH said he looked ahead to slide 11 and saw a projected decrease in student count. He asked if the projected decline would mean an \$18 million reduction in education spending from FY 2022 to FY 2023.

MS. TESHNER replied yes, education spending would be \$18 million less based on the FY 2023 projected student counts provided to the department by school districts.

9:10:38 AM

MS. TESHNER stated that there was an ADM decrease of 1842.96 between the FY 2022 projected and FY 2022 OASIS amounts. Decimals indicate that part-time students were counted. There was a decrease in the brick-and-mortar student count but an increase in the student count for correspondence schools. The projected OASIS for FY 2023 is an increased ADM for correspondence schools but a decrease for brick-and-mortar with an overall predicted decline in the state ADM. The total ADM for the state was projected to be less in FY 2022 than in FY 2021. However, the FY 2022 OASIS update revealed the ADM was more in FY 2022, emphasizing that the projections are just estimates.

[9:12:51 AM](#)

MS. TESHNER reminded the committee that in 2008 House Bill 273 was enacted to hold harmless school districts that experience a reduction in ADM at brick-and-mortar schools after adjustment for school size in the foundation formula is calculated. Turning to slide 7, she provided further details on the hold harmless provision and its calculation.

[9:14:17 AM](#)

MS. TESHNER stated that slides 8 and 9 provide a high-level look at the components of the Foundation Funding Formula. Once the ADM is determined, it goes through a series of calculations, including school size, district cost, special needs, vocation education, special education intensives, and Correspondence ADM. She noted that all are based on statute and that Correspondence ADM is added at the end of the formula to avoid double counting. The District Adjusted ADM is then used to calculate the Public School Funding Formula found under AS 14.17.410. It is multiplied by the Base Student Allocation (BSA) under AS 14.17.470, and the result is Basic Need. The amount of State Aid is determined by deducting the required local contribution and deductible Impact Aid from the Basic Need. The Quality Schools Grant is then added to State Aid to determine the total amount of State Aid entitlement. The last increase in the BSA occurred in FY 2017. Funding from outside the foundation formula has happened ten times. The last amount received was in FY 2020 for \$30 million. The governor's veto of \$30 million that was outside the funding formula is not on the graph.

[9:17:58 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH clarified that the governor vetoed FY 2021 and FY 2022, each was \$30 million. He stated that in 2014 one legislative action led to a multiple-year increase.

MS. TESHNER replied that was correct.

MS. TESHNER stated that the last column's bottom line shows a decrease of \$18,914.5 million in the FY 2023 projected funding formula versus FY 2022, which is a 1.6 percent decrease.

[9:19:04 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH added that when Governor Dunleavy vetoed the \$30 million in outside funds, he had stated that he would not support outside resources without a reading bill. It is important to understand the context of the governor's vetoes. The governor acknowledged the committee's work, the need for a

reads bill, and that outside money was likely to be vetoed until a reading bill passed. With a decrease in population, there will be a decrease in the amount of money obligated to education and, consequently, an opportunity to address the Reads Bill, SB 111, which the committee has worked on for months.

CHAIR HOLLAND added that the legislature has worked on it for years.

[9:20:23 AM](#)

MS. TESHNER stated that FY 2022 OASIS ADM compared to FY 2022 Projected ADM was an increase of \$11,637.4 million to the current budget. There was less brick and mortar but more correspondence enrollment than initially projected.

[9:21:01 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH asked if the combined total is close to a \$39 million reduction over the present year or is the \$18 million a projection over the present year.

MS. TESHNER replied that the governor's FY 2023 budget shows an \$18.9 million decrease based on the student counts reported by school districts. FY 2022's projection in the current budget is considered authorized, so in Leg Finance alone, there is an \$18.9 million decrease. FY 2022 OASIS and FY 2022 Projected are in the current year, so based on what the department was authorized, compared to what is required by statute to pay school districts, there is an \$11.6 million decrease.

She stated she did not compare FY 2023 Projected to OASIS, but overall it would be a slight dollarwise decrease.

[9:22:33 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND asked if there were other reasons for the decrease in projection besides the 75 percent that resulted from the Hold Harmless provision.

MS. TESHNER replied that the primary factor for the change was the Hold Harmless provision. Districts that received the school size ADM adjustment at 75 percent last year are now stepping down to a school size ADM difference calculated at 50 percent.

[9:23:32 AM](#)

MS. TESHNER stated slide 12 addressed additional state-funded programs affected by the student count period. The Pupil Transportation Program is based on the statutory formula AS 14.09.010. Only brick and mortar students are funded in the calculation. The FY 2022 appropriation was \$71.4 million, the

Estimated Actuals were \$71.1 million, and the FY2023 Projected Appropriation amount was \$71.8 million. It is fully funded based on statutory calculation and is a \$367,100 increase over FY 2022 appropriation.

9:24:39 AM

SENATOR HUGHES asked if the Pupil Transportation Program adjusts for the price of fuel or miles driven.

MS. TESHNER stated that the formula for the Pupil Transportation Program was determined based on actual costs in 2013 and implemented in 2015. Since then, it has changed a couple of times due to the consumer price index increases.

9:26:04 AM

SENATOR HUGHES asked when the Pupil Transportation formula was last adjusted for inflation.

MS. TESHNER answered that the costs that determine the per-student amounts were based on 2013 actuals. She will get back to the committee on CPI increase dates.

9:26:33 AM

MS. TESHNER stated that the Residential Schools Program is based on statutory formula AS 14.16.200. The funding formula at the bottom of slide 12 is used for Alaska's nine approved residential school programs. It contains a formula for a residential stipend and a one-time per-student round-trip transportation reimbursement. The FY 2022 appropriation amount was \$8.2 million. The estimated actuals were approximately \$4.8 million, a decrease of \$3.4 million. Eight districts operate the nine programs, but only seven were operational in FY 2022. Bering Strait and North Slope were not operational due to the ongoing COVID pandemic. This contributed to the reduction in actuals. The Projected Appropriation in FY 2023 is just over \$8.4 million, a \$228,000 increase over FY 2022. The increase is for the Lower Yukon Career and Technical Residential Program to increase its bed count from 50 to 70 students. Students would reside at the facility and attend Alaska's middle college for the school year in partnership with the University of Alaska.

9:28:40 AM

MS. TESHNER concluded her presentation and asked that attention be turned to the handout "State-Funded Program Funding Changes Due to Enrollment Fluctuations." The left three columns provide changes by district and how much they are estimated to receive for foundation, pupil transportation, and residential school

funding. The handout also provides the total amount of COVID relief money to be spent as of Jan 26, 2022, and FY 2022 unreserved fund balances. The far-right column is the net total by district. Tanana, the only district to predict an overall decrease, was down by \$78,104. The asterisk represents the 26 school districts that reported more than a 10 percent fund balance. HB 76 waived the 10 percent limit through June 30, 2025. This allowed districts to carry over more than 10 percent and was made possible through COVID relief funds. It enables districts the flexibility to spend COVID federal funds and state money.

9:30:19 AM

DEBORAH RIDDLE, Division Operations Manager, Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development, Juneau, Alaska, stated she would discuss DEED's accountability system, called the System for School Success. The Every School Succeeds Act was passed into law in 2015. Every state was required to create a plan that addressed accountability. Developing the plan required stakeholder engagement and the identification of success indicators. Some indicators were provided by the US Department of Education, while the state established others. The plan also consisted of school identification, exit strategies, and improved integration with standards and assessments. Title programs' use of funds, activities, monitoring systems, and technical assistance were also addressed. The plan was amended in March 2019 to address exit criteria for English language learners and long-term goals for interim progress. The plan was submitted to the US Department of Education and approved.

9:32:50 AM

MS. RIDDLE advanced to slide 15 and stated there are four school designations within Alaska's school accountability system:

1. Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) -  
Lowest 5 percent  
When ranked according to their accountability index value, the lowest-performing 5 percent of all Title I schools.
2. Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) -  
Graduation Rate  
The four-year graduation rate for a school, including grade 12, is less than or equal to 66 2/3 percent.

3. Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)

A school has one or more subgroups whose index value is less than or equal to the index value of the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools.

9:34:13 AM

SENATOR BEGICH asked if a school can have more than one designation.

MS. RIDDLE replied that a school only receives one designation.

9:34:35 AM

SENATOR HUGHES asked what department response does each school designation trigger.

MS. RIDDLE replied that if a school is designated as Comprehensive Support Lowest 5 percent it receives \$50,000 per year. Schools that are Graduation Rate or Targeted Support receive \$25,000 per year. Other assistance offered is coaching, technical support and webinars. The school improvement system is being revamped to be more targeted.

9:35:48 AM

SENATOR HUGHES stated she understands the concept of giving more money and support to lower-performing schools but asked if there was anything in the system that was more of a stick than a carrot.

MS. RIDDLE replied that more training and incentives would be included in the changes.

9:36:40 AM

SENATOR HUGHES stated she would be interested in seeing what develops because the changes are to increase student performance. If money and staff are being provided, but student improvement does not occur, then schools need to be motivated not to fall into the lower designations.

MS. RIDDLE responded that two programs would be offered in Spring. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports would be offered to the CSI Lowest 5 percent. A math and reading symposium would be provided to CSI and TSI schools.

9:38:14 AM

SENATOR BEGICH stated that if schools are receiving department resources, they should be required to attend. He commented that

the Reads Act, SB 111, requires an entity that benefits from the department's resources to meet associated outcomes. Departmental employees are placed to assist schools, which provides accountability measures. Throwing cash at a problem does not fix the problem. He stated he wants to see the department and school districts respond to failing schools in a way that improves student outcomes, such as learning to read.

SENATOR HUGHES said she agreed that requiring funded participation would be reasonable and beneficial to student improvement.

[9:41:44 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE returned to slide 15 and provided the last school designation:

4. Universal Support

Schools that have an index value higher than the lowest 5 percent, a graduation rate over 66 2/3 percent, and an index value for subgroups higher than the lowest 5 percent of Title I Schools.

MS. RIDDLE added that Universal Support schools receive basic technical and monitoring assistance.

[9:42:14 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE stated that the indicators for the accountability system have two grade spans. Both grades K-3 and 7-12 indicators include:

- Academic Achievement for English language and math based on school level summit of assessment proficiency rates.
- Academic Growth based on the percent of students that meet their growth target set the previous year.
- English Learner Progress measured by the percentage of students meeting the growth criteria on the Axis 2.0 English Language Proficiency Assessment
- Chronic Absentee Indicator based on identified students that miss 10 percent or more of enrollment days.

MS. RIDDLES said there is an additional graduation rate accountability indicator for students in the grade nine cohort that graduate in four to five years. She said it lags by one year for the accountability system. There is also an

accountability indicator for Grade 3 English Language Arts proficiency.

[9:43:26 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE stated that each indicator is weighted. Both age spans give 40 percent to the growth indicator and 10 percent to chronic absenteeism. Academic achievement is 30 percent for grades K-6 and 20 percent for grades 7-12. English language progress is 15 percent for K-6 and 10 percent for grades 7-12. The grade 3 proficiency assessment indicator is weighted at 5 percent, while the graduation rate indicator is rated at 20 percent.

MS. RIDDLE moved to slide 18 and said each indicator is assigned a point value based on students' actual scores and the indicator's weight. Point values range from a low of 0 to a high of 100. The results are done internally and checked by an outside contractor that verifies the results.

[9:44:58 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH asked if all school designations are measured and what happens when a school moves up in designation.

MS. RIDDLE explained that a school's designation is for three years, except for the graduation rate indicator. The three-year period is to give the department time to offer support and the school to improve its designation status. Every school's improvement plan has goals, assessments, and action steps. Schools must determine how success is measured and determined.

[9:46:02 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH asked what happens if a school's status does not improve.

MS. RIDDLE responded that the school is redesignated. Schools can stay at the CSI status, but if the school were designated as Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), it would be placed in a CSI designation after three years with no improvement.

[9:46:26 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH said part of the Moore settlement concerned litigation due to the department's inability to provide adequate targeted support to failing schools. Outcomes need to be achieved when resources are applied. Reporting and maintaining what is not working is not sound planning. Graduated sanctions refer to using a modest penalty with the knowledge that a higher penalty will be imposed when there is no forward progress. He

asked the department's approach if a district school continues to be on a designated list. He asked the department for a plan that would move schools off the designated list.

9:48:25 AM

MS. RIDDLE replied that the department is working with Region 16 Comprehensive Center to address changes to Alaska's school improvement plan. A group of districts was selected to work with an empowerment specialist who will guide employees through strategic analysis of programs and resources and help create action steps. Reports would then be given to the department. Districts would also need to submit school improvement plans to school boards and department staff. The department intends for the plans to be more transparent with more stakeholder engagement.

9:50:17 AM

SENATOR BEGICH suggested the department look at the public elements incorporated into the Reads Act. It focuses on department accountability and gives communities access so school boards can be held accountable. He stated he was pleased that changes to the plan were being made.

CHAIR HOLLAND commented that the department's presentation concerns Alaska's development of an accountability program that conforms with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) passed in 2015. He asked whether the plan had been put into play or received appropriate evaluation due to the COVID pandemic.

MS. RIDDLE replied that the department enacted its plan in 2017-2018. The most recent evaluation was in 2018-2019. The department received a waiver from the US Department of Education to hold the designations since an assessment was not done in 2019-2020, and most states' participation in 2021 was low. Alaska enacted the plan and has designations and indicators.

9:52:17 AM

CHAIR HOLLAND asked if schools were receiving coaches.

MS. RIDDLE responded yes and provided Alaska's highest index value as 99.41 and its lowest as 8.33.

9:52:39 AM

SENATOR HUGHES suggested that future presentations include data and what the department has done to help designated schools progress. It sounds like the data was not good, so the department is changing its plan. She asked if the department is

looking to other states for examples of improving accountability in Alaska.

[9:54:10 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE replied that the department has looked at SB 111 and what other states are doing. In addition to working with Region 16, the department is working with the Academic Development Institute (ADI), an organization of experts on the science of reading and school improvement.

MS. RIDDLE advanced to slide 19 and stated that data for each subgroup is provided to the US Department of Education. Each subgroup's accountability system generates an index score that determines whether a school is designated TSI. If a subgroup's index score is the same or less than the cutoff for CSI Lowest 5 percent designation, then a school is identified as a TSI for that subgroup.

[9:55:54 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE said that Alaska has schools with minimal student populations, so to maintain student confidentiality, an asterisk or blank space may be on DEED's accountability systems webpage. Data is also suppressed whenever a minimum size is less than ten students. For indicators where the value is between 0-20, the value will appear as 0. If it is between 80-100, it will appear as 100. This also keeps a student from being identified and is called the 80/20 Rule. It often appears on accountability indicators for smaller schools where it is common to see a score for one subject but not another.

[9:57:19 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH asked for verification that the department knows students' scores internally.

MS. RIDDLE replied yes, and added that for small schools, where it is not possible to do a complete accountability study, the department conferences with the principals, students, and families to determine needs.

[9:58:01 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE turned to slide 21 and said the department looks at long-term goals and measures of interim progress as part of accountability indicators. The department is required to look at how far away a school is from proficiency, take half that amount and establish benchmarks towards proficiency within ten years. This is done to establish growth indicators for every district.

[9:59:20 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE stated that overall index value indicators are established using October 1 enrollment calculations. There must be at least two indicators, and one must be selected from the following:

- Academic achievement in ELA or Mathematics,
- Growth in ELA or Mathematics
- Four-year or five-year graduation rate, or
- English Learner progress.

MS. RIDDLE said the department is working with an external contractor for help in calculating 2022 policy designations. The department cannot calculate growth because it does not have two years of data since there was no assessment in 2019-2020 and low participation 2020-2021. There will be a new assessment and data in Spring 2022. Therefore, a methodology needs to be developed to calculate growth.

[10:00:42 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES asked if the new and old assessments are too different to be compared and whether it would take a couple of years to acquire the necessary data.

MS. RIDDLE stated that there is a desire to know what progress districts have made. The department is working with a team of national experts from the Technical Advisory Committee, the US Department of Education, and an outside contractor to determine a way to assess progress and assign designation.

CHAIR HOLLAND asked if fiscal support comes from federal grants.

MS. RIDDLE replied that district funding for school improvements and designations are part of Title 10003(a). Growth indicators and calculations come from the general fund.

[10:01:57 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND asked if schools with low participation rates would continue with the same funding from the previous year.

[10:02:13 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE responded yes, funding would be through school improvement grants, which is part of Title 1 part a, 10003(a) funds.

[10:02:26 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE said DEED is trying to figure out district accountability and how to designate districts as outlined in SB 111. It is considering two options. One option would be to take the percentage of schools in a district receiving CSI or TSI designations and develop an index value. The other would be to take an average of all the school index scores within a district.

[10:03:03 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES asked what happens once a means of scoring is established.

MS. RIDDLE explained that school improvement in Alaska is based on each school's performance. Therefore, the primary focus of the state's improvement plan is individual schools.

As the second phase of school improvement, the state would look at data and determine which districts have a high percentage of CSI and TSI schools. The plan would be to work with those districts to create teams that promote positive group behavior and intervention supports (PGBIS) and the science of reading. The state has begun involving school boards in reviewing school improvement plans as a first step.

[10:04:30 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES commented that districts that have CSI and TSI schools should have to meet requirements like individual schools. The administration needs to be motivated to work harder if low school scores are pervasive within a district. She stated she was talking sticks, not carrots.

SENATOR BEGICH stated he agrees that there needs to be accountability measures. He opined that DEED's school improvement plan is similar to rapid-cycle testing in that the state, districts, and school board identify concerns, take action, and evaluate quickly. If improvement does not occur, alternative solutions are tried until one produces positive change. He asked if this describes the type of robust action the department plans to take.

[10:06:22 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE replied yes.

[10:06:40 AM](#)

KELLY MANNING, Deputy Director, Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development, Juneau, Alaska, stated she would provide a history

of the Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools assessment (PEAKS) and the direction the department is taking with the new assessment Alaska's System of Academic Readiness (AK STAR).

CHAIR HOLLAND asked if Alaska would continue to participate in NAEP.

MS. MANNING answered that Alaska would continue to participate in NAEP, but she would not be presenting information about it.

10:08:22 AM

MS. MANNING turned to slide 26 and said the statewide summative assessment has three parts. It is a tool for measuring knowledge and abilities. It indicates the knowledgeability of a student in particular areas of Alaska's educational standards, and it helps provide excellence in education by measuring the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction.

MS. MANNING moved to slide 27 and said statewide assessments inform families, teachers, administrators, and community leaders of students' performance across the state. The information helps guide policy decisions, curriculum updates, professional development, instructional decisions, and parent support recommendations. Summative assessment is end-of-the-year data that reveals the previous year's performance and is useful at the district, school, and state policy levels. Other types of assessments, like screeners, interim assessments, benchmarks, and unit assessments, can be combined with summative data to give a more holistic picture of an individual student's performance.

10:09:55 AM

Since 2017 the department of education has implemented the Performance Evaluation of Alaska's Schools (PEAKS). It is statewide and standards-based for grades 3-9. It assesses students' understanding of English language arts (ELA) and math. Its results are used to inform statewide decisions on accountability, school report cards, and other policy decisions within the education department.

10:11:08 AM

MS. MANNING turned to slide 29 and stated that the PEAKS performance data had a participation rate of approximately 91 percent, which was historical much higher than the most recent assessment year. Proficiency at the statewide level was 39 percent for ELA and almost 36 percent for math.

[10:11:48 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH asked if DEED has a target for statewide advanced proficiency.

MS. MANNING replied that the goal of the assessment is to determine Alaska students' proficiency. She is not aware of a statewide target.

MS. MANNING reiterated that in 2019-2020 there was no assessment data due to the pandemic. In 2020-2021 assessment participation was low because accountability was waived. This gave districts the flexibility to address ongoing challenges from the pandemic. While the 2020-2021 assessment provides some data, its usefulness is limited.

SENATOR HUGHES asked that the commissioner's statewide target for proficiency be provided to the committee, and if there is not one, there should be.

[10:13:32 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH stated that the assessments from 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 are not comparable, and the department should not use the data without explanation.

SENATOR HUGHES pointed out that DEED addressed this concern in slide 31.

MS. MANNING said DEED cautions comparing 2021 PEAKS data to previous years at the statewide level. Results from the assessment still have value at the school and individual levels. The gap provides an opportunity to approach student performance in a systematically new way. The AK STAR is a new balanced assessment system that DEED is in the process of implementing.

[10:15:57 AM](#)

MS. MANNING moved to slide 33 and stated that the objective goals of the new assessment are:

- Align standards, assessment, and instruction
- Improve student growth outcomes
- Educators and stakeholders understand how to use data to inform instruction
- Educators have a deep understanding of assessment, its purpose and when and how to use it.

[10:16:31 AM](#)

MS. MANNING advanced to slide 34 and said that DEED has contracted with Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) to

develop Alaska's new assessment. NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test has been used by 50 out of 54 Alaska school districts to determine interim growth for several years. The interim assessment checks student progress periodically. It provides instructional data that indicates progress in student knowledge, national norm comparisons, and areas for targeted instruction. The new assessment will be an innovative three-year balanced system that threads MAP growth testing with the new statewide summative assessment. This system will also reduce testing time by having the Spring assessment serve multiple functions.

MS. MANNING turned to slide 35 and stated that the assessment will appear similar to now for the first year of implementation. By the second year, the assessment will be in place. A MAP test will be given in Fall and Winter. Both tests will provide projected proficiency scores for the summative assessment. The summative assessment will be given in Spring and provide a student's level of proficiency. A Rasch Unit (RIT) score will also be provided for each assessment to aid districts in determining how well students are doing.

[10:19:47 AM](#)

MS. MANNING moved to slide 36 and stated that Spring 2022 will be the first summative administration of AK STAR. It will not have a linked score. After the assessment, there will be a standard setting, linking, and alignment study. In the 2022-2023 school year the system will begin as mapped on slide 35.

[10:20:37 AM](#)

MS. MANNING stated that DEED works closely with NWEA on assessment literacy training. For many years the department has provided training on conducting effective assessments and using informed decision making. Districts will continue to receive this training. The department is adding robust assessment literacy training that will specifically address what the information tells a teacher and how it can be used. Teachers are offered literacy assessment and instruction training to help them know how to drill down the data and use it for informed instruction.

[10:21:37 AM](#)

MS. MANNING advanced to slide 38 and stated that professional learning provided by DEED has three components. One component is live remote training. Educators throughout the state have access to live online training. Teachers also have access to the second component of self-directed online learning. The third component

will be certified facilitator (CF) training. Each district will have a facilitator who receives in-depth professional learning to act as a training resource within their district. Teachers also can earn professional learning credits.

SENATOR BEGICH said he was impressed by the presentation and especially liked that local people would be receiving training to become trainers.

[10:23:40 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND asked what grade levels are the focus of the PEAK assessment.

MS. MANNING replied grades three thru nine.

CHAIR HOLLAND asked if AK STAR is administered at the same grade levels as PEAKS.

MS. MANNING replied yes.

CHAIR HOLLAND asked if NAEP is administered in grades four and eight.

MS. MANNING replied yes.

[10:24:46 AM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Holland adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting at 10:24 a.m.